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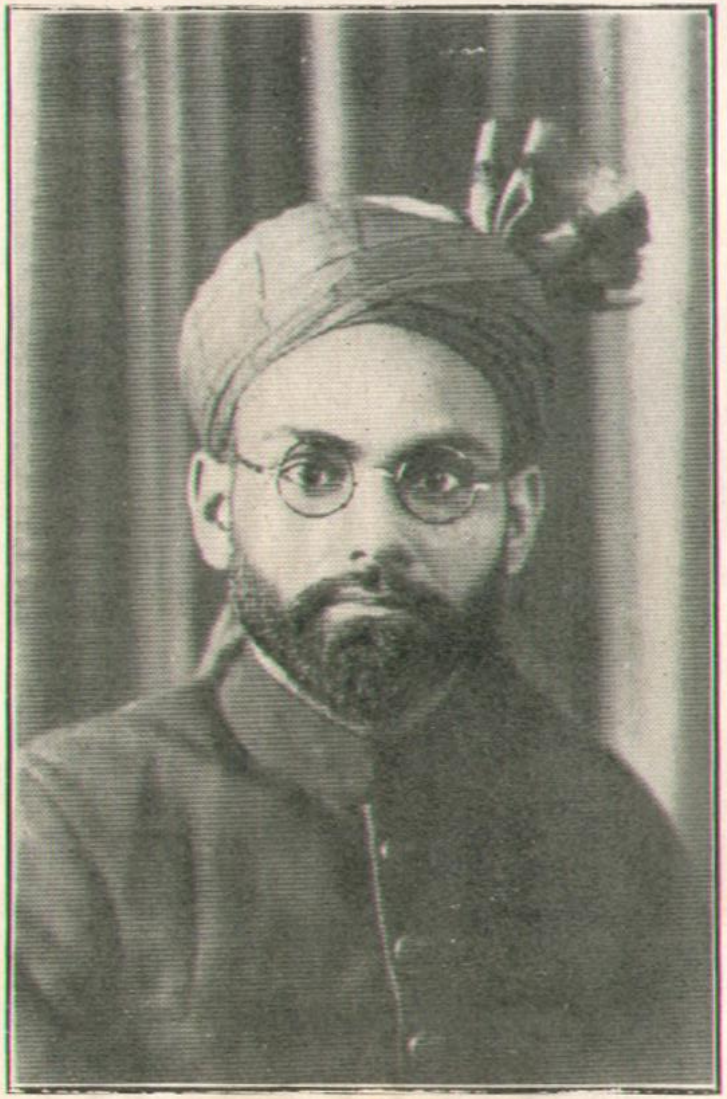

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بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

نحمده ونصلي على رسوله الكريم

NECESSITY OF RELIGION

The Position of Religion

[*By Mr. Mubarak Ahmad Fuelling (London)*]

The phrase 'Necessity of Religion' means indisputably the indispensibility of religion. 'Necessity of Religion' means, I take it, in other words, the necessity for a religious outlook by mankind. I propose to deal with it in this light. First, it is necessary to define religion in all its aspects, and secondly to show what characteristics of a spiritual nature reside in man, and then to show the indispensibility of cultivating those aspects, those spiritual natures along such channels as would yield the highest benefit to mankind. Religion is a strange and loose term; the origin of the word is dubious. We understand it in pure English to mean the system of thought which is influenced by a super-mind controlling the universe, or mental phases which have supernatural or non-earthly contacts.

Transcendental and Empirical Sciences

The mental phases of mankind, even in the spiritual or religious sense, are so varied and so greatly detailed in their

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characteristics that it would be quite impossible to demarcate a pure science of religion. Those organized divisions of knowledge, such as mathematics and physics and chemistry, are pure sciences inasmuch as they do, to an invariable degree, reveal an accuracy and a limit to all the laws which function within their particular spheres. Again, in those organized divisions, such as Ethics and Jurisprudence, you have no set fundamentals. Justice in one country is outlawry in another. The behaviour of mankind is an abstruse and varied factor, and those sets of principles that deal in any way with man's actions are usually the most difficult to formulate and classify. For while arithmetic and other pure sciences do not differ in any climate or race, two two's being four wheresoever you are, factors like politics and economics, in spite of what the Universities tell us, are as unstable as water, and vary as the national opinion varies. Those sciences that follow arithmetic are called transcendental because they teach things that are independent of experience. Numbers can be juggled with, without attaching them to concrete things. Five and four are nine irrespective as to whether you are talking of tables or doors. Those sciences that do not follow arithmetic are called empirical because we can only learn things about them through experience in touching, feeling, and acting. Economics deals with man in his relation to wealth, but, only in so far as a man acts normally. For even if a man upsets the apple cart of finance, we can still prevent the economic laws from working by suspension of certain operations, and so on.

Now when we come to religion, we have to decide as to exactly where we can place it amongst these various bodies of knowledge. Is religion, is true spirituality, a purely transcendent characteristic ? When we see people miserable, do we console them because they will give us money, or do we do so out of pity ? When we give money to poorer people, do we do so for fame or for love ? When we do console for sympathy's sake, when we give for charity's sake, then we commit a transcendental act, an act which proceeds from the soul, from the heart, but not from anything else. On the

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other hand, when we feel we must bow down and thank the Infinite Being either by crying out or silent prostration, we are really showing that religion is also empirical. Religion then is higher and inclusive of both kinds of knowledge.

Religion the Highest Science

The mental phases of the spiritually-minded are governed by the subject's attitude towards God, and towards the world in its various activities. Religion, then, is the highest science. It deals with God, the Author of all sciences, and with man and the created matter, in both of which the idea of science has matured. Religion deals with both ends of the mundane problem—with God, representing the highest, the purest, the infinite moral conception—with the earth, the lowest, the vilest and the cheapest, and the easiest to understand.

Kinds of Religion

Having traced the bare position of religious thought as being the throne of all knowledge or as the touchstone of all action or the key to all spiritual activities, I would leave that for a moment to discuss the various religious outlooks of the world as they show themselves to-day.

In the word 'Religion' we find a host of meanings. Many thinkers have divided up the groups of different religious aspects, but, generally speaking, the main divisions are two. First come the Naturalistic Religions. Primitive man has found his inner being stirred by his concrete surroundings. His mind is a poem, reflecting the glistening dew drops, the scamper of the rabbits, the shrill cry of the parrots. His heart goes out to all this—he feels helplessly in love with life, with living, and unconsciously gropes for the higher knowledge that will explain all nature to him. Such a religion is Pre-Naturalism. Again, other men have sought the idea that behind all these natural and concrete things, are demons and fairies, beautiful fauns, fighting for good

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against chuckling devils. And all this epic carried on, known to, but unseen by, man. Still other groups have elected some of their members magicians, and have listened to the sorceries of witches and quacks. Incantation and incense, drum-banging and shouting, all thrown into one in a hideous ritual that means nothing ultimately. Lastly, some groups have taken kings or beggers as heroes and deified them. This is called Anthropomorphic Polytheism. This diversion is typified in Hinduism, where, all the epic of past heroes and kings are swept into a sacred tradition, forever to be memorized as an epic of virtuous men—gods. These aforementioned four groups are the main branches of the Naturalistic division of Religions. The other great division is the Ethical division, which is far more sophisticated and complex. There you have got sub-divisions but perhaps the easiest way of showing you one or two would be to say that Monotheism, or belief in one God, and Polytheism, are the best axamples. In Ethical religions the main structure depends on men's actions in this world. In Naturalistic religions, men do not think of their conscience but allow the world and its peculiarities to guide them in their actions. In Ethical religions nearly all we know and do, has been instituted by means of prophets, or men who speak and affirm and declare of moral and spiritual things. In Naturalistic religions it is not individuals who show the light by their speaking and revealing, but the whole community who merely drag on like sheep wandering aimlessly and irregularly and erratically across the fields of time. Hegel, the much-over-rated philosopher, once said that Religions were of three kinds, firstly, the Religion of Nature, which corresponds more or less to what I have called Naturalistic religion, *i.e.*, Nature, Demons and Fairies, Magic, and Man—gods. Secondly, Spiritual Individualism, which is a kind of Islamic *Ijtihad*, where one obeys one's conscience, having faith in the idea that right is the outcome of what you *think* to be right. Thirdly, says, Hegel comes Absolutism, and he goes out of his way to prove that this is Christianity and the highest form of Spiritual Culture. Spread over all this

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great diffusion of religion come the racial aspects, and the local aspects and dogmatic peculiarities, all of which seek to make the very meaning of religion more difficult than ever.

Spiritual Characteristics of Man

I have tried very briefly to outline the vast scope of meaning embodied in the word 'religion' and, in making spare use of examples, tried to show the different kinds. I will now try to show what characteristics of a spiritual nature reside in man. Firstly I would quote a great authority. He says: One thing is certain, namely, that savages stand on virtually one footing with the civilized as regards the type of explanation appropriate to their beliefs and practices. We have no right to refer to " instincts " in the case of primitive man, any more, at any rate than we have in our own case.

Such is the fact upon which I base this paper.

Everybody born in the womb of the mother exhibits the same physical type of one of his parents, and has capacity of spiritual development equal to any of his or her kind. In human beings, particularly, the question of equality in the matter of moral capabilities is decidedly explained by the fact that civilised people seem to commit the same errors in cathedrals and Muharram festivals that cannibals do in their war dance round the pot that contains missionary or sailor broth. The spiritual man is to be found in the slums of Hongkong, on the Siberian wastes, in dreary dismal London, in repulsive Patagonia, indeed, he is everywhere, struggling against a cruel and vile world. Civilization has nothing to do with moral and spiritual activity. That is the point I wish to emphasize. The ability to become finer and nobler is inherent in all of God's creatures, and men do not need hot and cold water in the bedrooms or telephones, or a year in the backwoods to assist them to find a successful and higher mode of things.

It is an Islamic doctrine that all men are fundamentally equal. Equality in rights, in the pursuance of virtue, in the

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social and economic world, is the supreme claim of Islam. Moreover, it is only just and reasonable to state that capacity for religious reactions is found in all the human species. The only difficulty that presents itself at the very outset appears to be that all men do not think alike, especially in those matters which touch their deeper personalities. The complex ritual of orthodox Hinduism is lost to the Esquimaux; the Druidic rites of early England, (now unfortunately incorporated to some extent in daily English Church ritual), are entirely different in character to the Blessing of the Host and so on. The intense idolatry that ravaged Asia from Tibet to Ceylon, from Arabia to Japan, ranked side by side in its time with a belief in a transcendent Deity such as is found in Judaism and Christianity and Islam.

Does not the obvious fact appear to be that there can only be one set of answers to the queries of life ? Islam declares that God has sent His Vicegerents to all His creation and showed them the path of virtue, and the reasons for becoming moral and for developing spiritual natures. Does not Islam step in and say to the Naturalistic religion :—Yes ! all these things you see about you are wonderful, but they are nothing if you do not know the Creator of all things ? Does not Islam dispense with the fanciful imaginations of the magician and the charlatan ? Does not Islam sweep aside the absurdities of Polytheism ? Did not the Holy Prophet carry the Quran into the very citadel of Trinity and confound the 101 Christian sects that sprang up like repulsive toadstools between Medina and Jerusalem ? Did not the Jews, having spurned a Christ, see the deeper significance of a Muhammad ? Did not Islam give a culture to lethargic India, a culture which shines like a diamond beside the muddy stagnancy of idolatry ? Does not true religion seem to be the light in darkness, the clean water in which to bathe a travel-worn body—a fountain of sparkling coolness in a torrid desert ?

The behaviourism of man from earliest times has been studied and the following conclusions have been found :—

Firstly, that man is prone to feel inferior to a Higher Power.

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Secondly, that man is willing to accept a formulative religion if it provides him with a fifty per cent. peace of mind. That is, even if a religious idea is only half true and a man feels partly morally happy, he will accept it.

Thirdly, man is prone to think about a Creator, a Deity, infinitely removed, yet marvellously proximate. In other words, man seems to be mystically in touch with a supernatural being and to be ready to join with that Being in some way. Man incoherently wants something and yet cannot express exactly what he desires. In the Quran the Creator says that man was created to worship the Creator. Another exposition would be to say that the created man's individuality is so insignificant compared with the Creator that man is drawn towards the Creator. The Quran says that he who obeys the Creator shall be drawn more quickly to him. That in a nutshell, is the religious idea in Islam. Without God life has no meaning and religion no further utility.

The Desire for Religion

The argument thus advances that men and women need religion for their soul as they need food for their stomachs. If you go to the fashionable parts of London you will see those Theosophic, Spiritualist and Christian Scientist Churches full of enthusiastic women who, having nothing else to do all day attach themselves to any system of ethics, because the pursuance of such systems is a craving of the soul. The soul is like a little bird which, having wandered from the nest, is spurred to action. He flutters hither and thither, wandering away and hovering near always able to reach the parental nest. Or take children. They all love cream buns, which make them sick for a week, or bring them out in spots. They love the uncle who takes them out for a day so that they can eat all the things their mother forbids or denies them at home. But even as neither mother nor uncle always knows what is good for the children's tummies, so it is true that while the soul craves for religion it often gets satisfied with the wrong thing. The finer the soul, the more exclusive the taste, and Islam

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teaches that the purer the soul the more happy will it become and the more will men cleave together. Islam holds that religion and spiritual truths do not change, it is the soul's respective capacity that changes. Foul and licentious pigs of men become humble and pure merely through the self-purifying effects of the soul.

And even as Tommy finds that cream buns do not agree with his tummy, and ultimately eats toast and drinks milk, so will the soul in its natural urge for happiness, if it is helped, seek better food, until it evolves as the haven of peace and spiritual contentment for the body. Islam teaches that the soul's first step must be in recognition of Allah, as the Infinite Beauty and Goodness, and after that recognition, the journey, though long, is a pleasure. Thus the Muslim calls religious duty a pleasure, because in the way of God all duties are pleasures.

There is nothing so hard to prove in the world as a negative and no negative is so hard to prove as that which constitutes the denial of the existence of God. If men think their coming and going, their restraint or their licence, their virtue and their vice, their laughter or their tears, are all so much the result of a chaotic jumble of emotions in matter itself, then they lose the very idea of life and its meaning. Religion is, in every sense of the word, the science of the meaning of life. It is the science of life's values, and without any idea of what the currency of any country was, we would be very stupid to pay out, to change coins or to receive them, if we did not at first know the rate of exchange. It is true we instinctively tend to moral progression, but unless we know how and why we tend, and as to what exactly moral progression means, we cannot in any sense of the word have really lived. Religion is the blood of our moral bodies; it is the air through which we can get a glimpse of the unattainable and the Infinite.

Uniformity in Religion

Islam stands first and foremost for solidarity and uniformity of opinion. It is the only religion which does so, not

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only because it has the courage to do so, but also because it has the right to do so. It has received the sanctity of God, and the cloak of all the prophets. No reformer of any kind has appeared on this earth whose ethical standpoint, in differing from Islam, ever succeeded in getting him any farther than a nameless grave in some lonely waste. If religion means being God-mad, then religion is indispensable and he who is religious is like a most powerful monarch for there is no other asset that secures a man's happiness more than the Love of God.

Islam has explained truths to the uneducated; has explained life to all men; and prepares men, not for the horrible retrospective panorama of a death-bed confession, but for a firm step forward into the future world, a world vouchsafed to all righteous and holy men. Go out into all countries of the world, and you will see men living in different ways, having religions of money, religions of sex, religions of animals, religions of flowers, religions of nature, religions of art, music, science and cant and hypocrisy, but they do not compare or appear in the same landscape as the worshippers of Allah, as a true Muslim.

Islam is the only religion that aims at a world federation —not a stupid federation between mill-owners and Princes and beggars that has taken ten years and eighty million words to achieve but even then a third-rate scheme, but a brotherhood that will bring together men by a mere "Assalamo-Alaikum" by a mere "Ash-hadu anla ilaha illallah, Muhammad-ar-rasul Allah".

Go to a Hindu, ask him what he can do for the world out of his religion, which barely allows him to cross even a sea.

Go to a Christian, and ask him whether, when he has cleared up the patchwork guilt of chaos and enmity in Europe, he has any practical plans to unite the world into one progressive moral unit.

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Go to the Jew, the Theosophist, the Buddhist, the Lamas, the African sub-tribes, and what will their answer be? That they have no such practical plans.

Religion is necessary only if it is Islam, otherwise eschew it, as a devilish awkward piece of bartering in conscience and unseen things. Unity of men is achieved only in Islam. Uniformity of belief is found only in Islam. Then Islam alone is *the* religion, the Highest Science.

The Universality of Religion

While uniformity of religious ideals and beliefs must be a logical outcome of the fact that religion is the highest science, it in no way implies that uniformity will always be obvious and clear. The Japanese Muslim cannot exactly coincide with the Arab Muslim in all his intuitive religious activities, for while there do exist ethnological and climatic differences, there must exist a slightly aberrated attitude towards the one truth. The only remedy for this aberration, which is to be met with to-day, is for such an intermixture of marriage and culture to take place so as to produce eventually the normal mean of physical standards that would undoubtedly promote the normal mentality and thus would evolve the normal and much desired man. If you think that this experiment is too unpractical then you draw your blue pencil across the Quranic teaching, the Bible teaching and all practical ethical doctrine since they are nothing.

Religion cannot be a true necessity whilst barriers of language, race, and culture divide and turn men against each other. Religion is positively precarious, and its practice is positively enervating in this horrible half and half stage where heresies surge in and make a bold stand for eternity.

Necessity of Religion is a statement I uphold with this condition only that the religious experience and religious life is strictly and uniformly exercised. A religious man cannot healthily exist among weeds. The Quran makes bold to say that Prophets have been sent to nations who really

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have been left behind in the religious evolution, to bring them up to the standards of the best contemporary religious ideas. To keep abreast with the best religious phases, one must live in a world in which no man rises up against another, no man finds the love of wealth greater than the Love of God, and so on. In this way the very ideas of nation, national and international, would be meaningless qualities, and all men would cleave together through the uniformity of their greatest experience. Then indeed would religion be a pure science. It is the only collected body of facts that can evolve from the empirical to the fine solid fact stage. We can harden or jellify religious life by universal co-operation and by that way only.

Our Spiritual Needs

Just as our physical bodies develop and change, so our religious life must mature, so that the religious and moral activity can be handed down in the same perfect image as our bodies are passed on through the ages. As we have lost the fine senses of smelling and breathing ; as we have lost the appetite to consume fresh uncooked food, as we have lost the vigour of our primitive forefathers, so our religious life has become so changed as to be limited in its scope as our physical life. But whereas in our physical life we have methods of transport, methods of communication, methods of dietary rectification, in our spiritual life we are obliged to listen to the Prophets of God to " make up for ", if I may use so " colloquial " a phrase, our lack of religious development. You will see at once that we ourselves have evolved the means to provide the deficiencies in our physical life, but we have been obliged to be assisted in the mending of the defects of our spiritual life.

Liberty of Conscience and Organized Religion

One thing is permanent, and that is, as so often has been said—the struggle for liberty of conscience. At first thought

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the very idea of liberty of conscience seems to preclude the idea of formulative religion. The cry for the liberty of conscience has been the apologia of the heretic and the reformer. It immediately destroys the subjective nature of the individual to the dicta, to the actions, to the obedience of past great religious thinkers, and perhaps to the prophets themselves. All this would be true, if it were not for the fact that the fundamentals on which everybody's conscience is based are strictly uniform and equal. The only factors which make two conscientious religious men disagree are factors which usually have nothing to do with real religion at all. Purely spiritual activity, purely moral activity is seen equally among Hindus and among the South Sea illiterates and among Presidents of the United States. It pervades the inner being of the man, and it exists even when it least manifests itself. What a grand idea on which to build a Utopia of the world, the possession by everyone of a uniform stable conscience. The idea, however, of a fundamental and uniform conscience in mankind is not always easy to support. Nearly 2,000 years before Christ, the hubs of civilization being in India and in China, reveal atheistic and scanty beliefs regarding social and religious ideas. Where is your uniformity of conscience? Was it demanded by Gautama Buddha, was it underlying the spirit of the Rig Vedas or the later Upanishads? In the more or less philosophic sections of these scriptures that were compiled long before Christ you get a preponderance of atheistic doctrine, in spite of the wealth of social laws which did not carry much progressive moralism in them. Was Confucius anything more than a social reformer in the end: did his injunctions lack a spiritual food that would have kept the Chinese religious body from turning polytheistic? On the other hand, did the great Spirit, so easily fostered in the minds of the native children, really mean God Transcendent to the American Indians? In all these great evolutions have empirical factors purchased the freehold of our souls, or our consience, or has the transcendental idea of right and wrong, of good living, of God Himself won out: I think that the empirical factors have won many battles. But besides all

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this, we can see the history of the religion, of the religion of moral necessity from Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Jesus and Muhammad (Peace and Blessings of God be upon them). These great men, our brothers, flesh of our flesh, like us in all ways, human and loving, lived the religious life, *i. e.*, the normal life and offered men a pattern on which to mould their lives. They all said—" If you leave God you will go astray." Look at the world with all its stupid theological books, all so much waste of time because the sincerity behind their publications was founded on nonsense and irrationalism. Millions of people have strayed, crying out for religious truths, themselves living proofs that true religion is necessary. On the other hand, look at the lovers of the world with its petty dowry. The Quran tells us to give up those toys that make us pleasure-loving. Nothing is so valuable that it has no price, but truth is cheap to find and indescribably precious when found and used. Islam tells us that men often hanker after the world's goods instead of thinking of higher things.

Another aspect of Religion

Let us take another aspect of religion as an indispensable factor.

Considering ourselves introspectively, what is the purpose of life if no religious or spiritual impetus exists ? What do men hurry to the office every morning for ; what do men scrape money together for ; what do men wear out their bodies for ? Can life have any meaning for them at all ? Do we reproduce our species and live like plants, the seeds of which, falling into the earth, send up shoots which again grow into plants ? Does this evolutionary process continue until either chaos or a blackening out appears ? If men do not seek a solution for their life, for the world, for the very idea of existence, they might all just as well commit suicide. Why do we love our children ; why do we not regard them as a mere chemical compound which, in the great reproductive machinery, will be lost in future years ? The explanation of all our lives, of all our highest reactions of our deeper feelings, is purely a religious

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explanation, and the whole question as to whether religion is necessary or not, is really answered by saying that it exists whether we develop it or not. If people are insane enough to live merely because they happened to be born, they are insane enough to reproduce without any logical or even beautiful inspiration, or insane enough to die when they feel ill instead of struggling and screaming as they invariably do to hold on to the slender threads that keep them this side of the river of Death.

Without arguing that Creation is or where or what we are, we at least know that we have two important factors about us. One is our physical body, attended as it is with all its limitations, succumbing as it does to all ills and reacting as it does to different stimulations, and urging us, unconsciously, owing to the physical peculiarities of our structure. The other factor is our spirit or soul, which possesses everything which the body has not. Where diversion, limitation, and physical nature characterize the body, the soul knows no laws like those and exists under a very different light. Now it seems very reasonable to suppose that since there are laws, immutable laws, which govern our physical bodies, there are also a set of laws which govern our souls. The only point to note in this direction is that we can, by the help of doctors, discover what ails the body. We can measure strength : we learn about sanitation, about muscular development, about eating and drinking and their effects and so on. But the soul is a restless thing, constantly agitating the ignorant and helpless man, tending him to express in his heart things that he does not know how to express ; prompting him to achieve things, the value of which achievement he does not know.

Islam claims that it has assisted man in discovering the best life, for it has shown men the right course on which to steer the ship of life. The Quran, being Divine, furnishes the created man with answers to all his questions and furthermore comforts him in the highest measure. Islam has met

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the necessity of religion. But it is the only religion to have done so.

Western Attitude towards Religion

On the other hand, there are millions alive to-day who would dispute the necessity of organized religion. Ask the roadmender, the train driver, the gardener, if they deem religion necessary. Their answer would be 'no it is not necessary'. But I put it to you that that is the only answer they could give, because the only religion they know anything about at all is the very one that is not necessary. Christianity has left a bad reputation behind. Men think that since one glove won't fit that no glove exists at all. Men are not religious pioneers. When one religion fails, they think all fail. And so, in fact, it is not a question as to whether a man *says* he needs no religion, but rather whether he, in fact, needs religion. Like Castor oil, the last person you ask as to its qualities is he to whom you are administering it.

The greatest enemy of Islam is Christianity. They differ much more widely than Muslims often claim. To Christians the religious idea is entirely to be divorced from the social and political and civil idea. Therefore Christ, according to them, saw nothing of the affairs of the world. The narrowness of modern Christianity reveals one thing. The present-day indifference to religion in the West, the present-day attraction to materialism is due, not to Christ, but to those who, in preaching in his name, thought that if religion were really more necessary than nothing else was. Christians must admit that their God-man did not foresee the plight that would ultimately overtake his flock, Monasteries and nunneries and Popery hand in hand with sordid politics. Ah—religion has been extremely necessary in European history, St. Bartholomews' Day, the Jewish Pogroms, the Crusades, the Inquisition, the Borgias, the Catholic Kings of England, Richelieu, Wolsey, all—every one of these—proves that (Christianity has deemed religion so necessary that) nine-tenths of the history of the West is steeped in the most diabolical acts committed in its name.

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And nowadays is Christianity necessary? It is driven out of the Royal Courts of Justice—you are not obliged to swear on the Bible. Christianity has been driven out of the Palace of Westminster. Neither House considers it good taste to breathe a word about it. It has been driven out of the Legislature, out of the Civil Service and out of the Labour Party. Yet all these are the very institutions that stand in greatest need of religion the inclusion of which would cause a mental revolution and re-awakening within a year.

There has been nothing so farcical in the last century as the efforts and policies of the Christian churches and bodies in the matter of appealing to the people of the East and the West. Christianity has had the task of fighting the instinctive peculiarity of the Western ideals ever since the former was introduced. Again, the social history of Europe cannot in any way be indentified as a legitimate evolution of Christ's teaching. Festivals have grown out of fasts, orgies and revels out of days of penitence and sorrow. The rite of Holy Communion has become a religious picnic, a piece of bargaining, which has not and, indeed, never will improve the very inferior moral outlook of the communicants. Withheld as this privilege of communion is, for those most logically in need of its pseudo benefits, it is given with great aplomb to those who least deserve it.

The appalling ignorance of the multitude of church-goers, who do not understand even the rudiments of the doctrine of Atonement and still less appreciate the implications of the Doctrine of Trinity, merely reveal that " the ignorance of the devout man is the cause of his devotion " is best read into the lives of the European Christians.

The churches are faced with the impossible task of continually reconstructing and re-invigorating the spiritual tissues of the congregations. They do not succeed in any way, because Christianity in this age is an exceedingly complex doctrine. The origin of its fundamentals can be traced to historical events and not to any true source in Christ. The last supper has been made a ritual which finds

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no better backing except in such words of Christ "Do ye this in remembrance of me."

I have no time to dilate on other religious characteristics. Suffice it to say that apart from Christianity, which is now seriously collapsing, there is no system that is increasing its followers except Islam. Hinduism is insular, never expanding outside India. All the religious phases such as present-day Buddhism, Lamaism, Confucianism, Lao-Tzeism and Parseeism are gradually being inundated by the waves of time and reason and truth.

Decadence Among the Muslims

I would say, however, that whilst Islam is healthy and developing, there does dwell in its midst many unpleasant and detracting influences. The liberal schools of thought in Turkey, India and Egypt have damaged the fine advance of original Islam. Prayer, the insurance policy of keeping in touch with God, has been deprecated. Arabic has been discarded. Pilgrimage has been underrated. But there is no religion in the world that can go back to its original life as Islam can, and our endeavour—yours and mine—is to live the life approaching the most noble of creation, the Holy Prophet, in spite of laughter and jeers of people who think spiritual religion is unnecessary.

Again there is the mystical element in Islam, highly dangerous. Mystical religion has grown always out of concrete religious beliefs. I call Mysticism the hyperbole phase of the religious complex. It is the tangent movement in the coherent circle of spiritual things. The desire to get away to go above the seemingly ordinary religious beliefs, to annihilate self in the Divine essence, seems to be an exclusive journey of the souls of just a few. But that pilgrimage is the pilgrimage of every soul, and the mystics themselves are making a mist of what is no mystery at all. Complete immersion in the God-Idea *i. e.* in the One Complete Idea is not achieved, as most would believe, by taking a

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complimentary ticket and sitting in a room like a hermit, uttering platitudes and aphorisms to a few ignorant devotees. The great mystics walk and talk like everybody else, nay—eat and drink normally, they act normally, for they are among ourselves, unknown and unhonoured. The so-called Mysticism in Islam has done much damage. The early Muslims represent the prototype of the Utopian achievement, the latter so-called Mystics merely caused a heresy that ate into the vitals of Islam until quite lately in our days.

The Practicality of Islam

The necessity of religion is brought home more keenly to the Muslims because the Quran again and again speaks of the triumph of Islam. Moreover, the Quran explains why such and such a belief is beneficial. Still again the Quran shows the world that religion is not a set of principles divorced from everyday life. Nay, rather it is itself everyday life. In public administration, in international policy, in the kitchen, in the street, in the market-place, the atmosphere of Islam must pervade. What Muslim could consider the question of the necessity of Islam. If the primitive man in the Naturalist group is told by the wise man that a certain God pushes the Sun up in the sky in the morning and lets it roll down into the lake of night in the evening, what consolation will that bring? Will it make the primitive man any more moral? If the wise man says anything sensible at all I could swear that you would find its equal in the Quran. Any prompting to a moral life is found in the Quran, and the necessity of religion and the leading of a religious life is brought home most acutely to all Muslims.

The best of all the phases that men have manifested in their religious life is incorporated in Islam. The savages, even in their delightful contact with nature, are tortured by ignorance of the hereafter. Islam can soothe such people. The Chinese peasants, when their villages and goods are swept away by the swollen torrents, would find consolation in Islam, instead of acknowledging the Lord of Water.

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The Accommodation of Islam

What I want you particularly to take note of is that all those religious phases, which include as their pivot the idea of a transcendent Deity—such as Christianity, Judaism, American Indian religions, and so on—find an accommodation within the fold of Islam. The God being a Power in the Natural and Physical world appealed strongly to those vast hordes that thronged Mongolia and the northern part of America. That conception of God was particularized by those people to the exception of all other attributes. Again, Judaism, especially in its early expressions, particularized the Just and Requiting attributes of God. Those attributes, strongly stressed in Judaism, find a more satisfying level in the Islamic idea. Christianity, never slow to stress the Supernatural and Omnipotent idea of Love, even to exclusion of pure reason and exigency, forced the other attributes of God into obscurity—nay even denied Deity the Infinite omnipotence in all matters. It can be seen, therefore, that in organized religions Islam has placed a sufficient and just stress on all those points which, in other religious phases, are either unstressed or unmentioned or uncultivated. Again, religion has been found to work among tribes that do not embody the idea of Deity in their beliefs. But have they gone far—have they improved? Have they enriched their lives? Is it sufficient to say that we have plenty of food, plenty of cattle and plenty of children? Does life, does the purpose of life, stop there? On the contrary, the purpose of life, as the Quran puts it, is bound again and again in the belief in God, and the submission to His will. A man without religion, without God, is like a man who has a library full of books but never reads them, or lends them, but has them merely for show.

Psychological Necessity of Religion

I would say rather that religion is indispensable because it cannot be dispensed with. While there is a limit to any abstract ideas of thinking, while we ourselves are finite or limited in part, then so long must that deficiency be rectified

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by the spiritual activity of our minds. Religion supplies us with all the facts that fill the gaps. It is the reason for everything. It is the system that makes us sure. If we were divorced from the idea of the existence of God, we should wonder at the bounty of nature. So that, in every way, there are thousands of factors in our lives that must be explained away, either religiously or physically, or metaphorically. But the very fundamentals of science itself are founded on hypotheses or conjectures that are much more shaky than the mere beliefs that in the religious sense bring the best out in us. I do not, therefore, think that men have been able to dispense with religion with any measure of success. Religious remorse is a malady to which all men are prone. Do not men shut themselves up in their rooms and feel that they have missed a lot in life? On their death-bed, do not men just shed one tear of repentance and sorrow? Are not the hardest men stirred by children climbing on to their knees and wishing to play with them? It is the spirit that moves them on all these occasions that make men feel that there is something deeper and finer in life than the material comforts. Of all the things we can take with us into the next world, what will comfort us most? What fool is he who tries to cross the frontier into the next world without a passport of repentance, without the coins of spiritual contentment, without knowing the language of the Great Beyond.

Religion at the outset, means the cultivation of pure conscience. That and nothing more is the real way to create a better world. Past precedents and examples are dangerous points to consider when looking forward or when rebuilding. The past history of the world in all its activities dismays the very enthusiastic spirit of the world reformer, of the lover of spiritual things. Religion becomes a thing to which men ascribe their names and their public actions, but in which their hearts never experience much delight. The Quran says that you can tell a Muslim by the marks of prostration on his forehead. It means that the religious man can be pointed out by the way he treats life and men and Almighty God, by the

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way he submits to the Will of God, by the way he fosters the brotherhood of man and does not cling to the goods of this world.

The Challenge of Islam

The challenge of Islam has well stood the test of time. If victory of Islam does not, in these days, appear so brilliant as in former times, it is due to the lack of comparison to any living religion. Christianity, if it offers anything at all, cannot offer anything better than, or as much as Islam. If Islam is set aside, then nothing can be offered as substitution. If Islam has been rejected, it is due to controversial superstructures that have obscured the original teachings of the Holy Prophet. Where prophets have specified to the greatest detail, their messages have become insular in character and local in scope. Where prophets have wisely left a great deal of reasoning to the pure and moral conscience, there has been a uniformity, for so long as the individuals care to nourish it. The very idea of Khilafat was to present that uniformity of policy by vesting its nature in the vicar of God as a chosen successor to the Holy Prophet. The heresies which have crept into all schools of thought merely reflect the weak and reactive judgment of men who had nothing better in life to do than to dilate upon and gamble with the Quranic generalisation, the true pursuance of which became lost in these later permutative and combined meanings.

Danger of Pedantic Philosophy

The most astonishing heresies have arisen in the history of Islamic thought, their very fundamentals have run contrariwise to the very spirit of Islam, but their naivete of inception, and their rich and influential sponsors have, time after time, brought the acquiescence of the masses. The most cunning heresies, written in the finest and most elegant language have swayed the hearts of men, because it was fashionable to patronise aphorisms and platitudes, irrespective of the danger underlying their very utterance. Coupled with literary heresy there are hosts of examples of the active kind.

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The Sufi schools flooding the world of Islam with that liberality of outlook that granted an exemption from the daily prayers for reasons that present no more truth than that the Quran was a primer, to be discarded after the first periods of religious Mysticism. The very idea of such Mysticism is entirely foreign to the character of the Holy Prophet, and, judging by the nature and the number of works that have been written on this subject and the mental capacity of the participants in the absurd and ridiculous heresy, we can conclude that such people and their literature are as un-Islamic as indeed High Mass is un-Christian.

Never in the past has the necessity for Religious progression been more acute. The Promised Messiah, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, came to show us the way to fulfil that necessity, in the spirit of the True Islam. The present Head of the Ahmadiyya Community, Hazrat Ameer-ul-Mumineen Khalifat-ul-Masih (may God strengthen his hand and preserve him) spends all his time in directing the key-ship of the Islamic fleet, proving over and over again that the life devoted to religion and the uplift of one's brother is a life not only well spent but sanctified in the fragrance of Almighty God.

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A GLIMPSE OF MUSLIM PEOPLES IN EUROPE

[By Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah]

Muslims in Yugoslavia

Before the Great War those who are now called the Yugoslav Muslims, numbering 1,679,000, were scattered in Serbia, Montenegro and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Amongst these people many Albanians and the Turks have taken permanent residence in the southern portion of the country. Not till 1930, however, was an official Moslem organisation set up at Belgrade under a Raisul-Ulema, or Head Ecclesiast, with two Councils of the Clergy, one at Sarajevo, the other in Skoplje ; the former for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the latter for the Moslems belonging to the old Turkish provinces of the Sanjak of Novipazar, Macedonia and Montenegro. Since the reorganisation much progress has been made, notably amongst the Bosniak as compared to the southern Serbians, both in religious and cultural education. Health conditions, too, have greatly improved for the Majlis Ulemas of Western Yugoslavia report an increase of 57,764 in Muslim population over the last census taken in 1931. In Bosnia and Herzegovina there are 1,120 well-run mosques, staffed by 1,522 members of the clergy for a large congregation of the Hanafi School of Islam ; although there is a sprinkling of Bektashis, and Sufis of Naqshbandi, Rifaeti, and Molavis Order.

The department of the Muslim Pious Foundations, known as Waqf, maintains 877 Maktabs, or Preliminary Schools teaching the principles of Islamic theology; and even in vocational Government schools Muslim religious education is imparted. Moreover, there are 40 finishing colleges, the one called Madrasatul Muntaha opened in 1934 in Sarajevo being reserved for girls. At a mixed college at Zenica there are 30 girl students, who, like the boys, will graduate as religious instructors after a five years' course.

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In more outlandish regions of the country, summer schools for theological teaching are also organised. The people there are justly proud of Gutbey Medrassa in Sarajevo, founded 400 years ago.

An Academy of Islamic Science known as Sheriat Academy has recently been brought into being through the efforts of Dr. Mahmud Spaho, the Muslim Minister of Communications in the Yugoslav Government; the tolerant policy of which is largely due to the broadmindedness of its President Dr. Milan Stoiadinovitch. The Muslim Shariat Courts were limited before 1929 to the areas of large Muslim populations; but in virtue of an Amendment introduced along with a Financial Law in 1935-36 they have extended their sphere to all parts of Yugoslavia and thereby conferred great advantages on the entire body of the Muslims. It is by no means a matter of small congratulation for the Yugoslav Muslims that, although they were practically ruined as a result of the Great War, they now possess 2,432 Pious Foundations to the yield of which their Government adds a large annual subvention.

The Albanian Muslims

From this happy section of the Yugoslav Muslims we may turn to Albania, a region once part of the Turkish Empire, comprising Scutari, Jannina and parts of the Vilayats of Kossovo and Monastir. Islam was introduced by the great divine Sari Saltik in the thirteenth century. Under its able ruler, King Ahmed Zogu, the Albanian population, about two-thirds of which belongs to the Bektashi Sufi sect of Islam is happy and contended. There is a well-established Moslem college at Tirana. In the country the Muslim majority is very amiably disposed towards the Christian minority, monogamy is the general rule, and women's status is very high. The capital, Tirana, with a population of 31,000, mostly Muslims, boasts of a beautiful mosque built by Sulaiman Pasha in the seventeenth century. Another important mosque is that of Adham Pasha, whilst the small town of Tepeline retains the memory of Ali Pasha's castle where he received Byron in 1809. The country is full of

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relics of Islam's past grandeur; but although the faithful are very devout, education, especially religious education, is not very advanced.

The Muslims in Hungary are Hungarian citizens, enjoying the same rights and privileges as their Christian fellow-countrymen, and have full liberty of religious observances. A law of 1916 recognised the Islamic religion in Hungary; but its leaders improved their conditions as recently as 1931. For although there were as many as 3,000 Muslims in the country, more than 500 in Budapest alone, they did not possess a single centre of worship, nor any well-regulated schools for the religious instruction of their children.

Islam in Greece

The story of Islam in Greece is the story of Turkey's domination of 400 years. The Greeks had full religious liberty, and were treated on an equal footing with other subjects of the Turkish Empire. Many of them were reckoned among the pillars of the State; but in 1829 Greece gained independence, and in 1913 Crete was ceded to her. Out of a population of about 7 millions, the Moslems there are estimated at present at about 140,000, mostly of Turkish parentage, whilst others are of Bulgarian and Caucasian blood. They live almost exclusively in Eastern and Western Thrace, and although an Islamic Muftiate (ecclesiastical administration) is granted to them, they are represented in the Greek Parliament by only four members. In this area there are some seventy-five mosques, which employ nearly 250 Imams and Muezzins; but their religious schools do not number more than a hundred. Shortly before the Great War there were forty-three mosques in Salonika, but some of these are said to have been transformed into churches. I have also been informed that the beautiful mosque called Hamzah-Bay-Djama in the heart of Salonika was converted into a cinema, although the original style and decorations of that place of worship have not been disturbed. The social, cultural and economic condition of the Greek Muslims is very miserable. The number of Intellectuals is relatively

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very small, and they are seldom met with in Government services or in any good profession. The sum allotted to their education is 533,000 drachmas, which is said to provide not even one-tenth of what is needed. The intellectual poverty is chiefly responsible for the absence of cultural expression. They have only one newspaper, which is published in the old Turkish alphabet, and little effort has been made to study or reorganise their condition.

Muslims in Bulgaria

The population of Bulgaria is about 5½ millions, of which some eleven per cent. are of Turkish origin. According to the last statistics (1926) the number of Moslems is about 750,000. The majority are Turks, and one-tenth consists of pure Bulgarians of the Tomak race. The Muslims live chiefly in the regions of Shumla, Razgrad, Widin, and Svitchto-Roshtuk, and a considerable number are to be found in Sofia. They are mostly farmers, and illiteracy among them is very high. Little has been done by the Government to encourage their cultural and social aspirations. As an important minority they are represented in Parliment, but in a proportion too small to their total number, having had 10 seats out of 274. There is a Muftiate at the head of which is the Grand Mufti Hussain Ahmedov, who lives in Sofia. He controls religious affairs, appointing the Imams with the assistance of a Moslem Council. There are some twenty Islamic schools, on Turkish lines, scattered in the various towns inhabited by Muslims. Several Muslim daily newspapers and periodicals are published in Turkish, though they have ceased to appear, owing to the depression, with the exception of two or three survivors. Mosques are found in many cities and villages built in the Turkish style. The two most worthy of mention are the Benja-Bashi-Mosque in Sofia, and the beautiful Mesjid of Biok-Djami with its magnificent nine domes, finished in 1494. Several Muslim schools exist at Philippopolis, while a number of mosques from the Turkish age are to be found at Widin.

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Islam in Rumania

The population of Rumania is estimated at about 18 millions, the Muslims numbering 200,000, mainly of Turkish origin. The majority of them live in the Dobruja, the rest being scattered about Constanza, Tulchia, Dorstur and Ada-Kalaa Island. Some 500 live on that island, mainly fishermen and craftsmen. Remains of Turkish rule in the form of mosques, towers, citadels, are still to be seen there. During the early years of the Turkish conquest thousands of Anatolian Turks emigrated and setted down in the Dobruja, and started colonising the country and erecting a number of mosques and towers. Most of the Muslims work in the country as peasants and farmers. They are loyal to their Government and, being true patriots, have gained the Government's confidence and support. Their social and cultural status is much more advanced than that of their Bulgarian brethren. They form a homogeneous portion of the Rumanion nation and enjoy religious autonomy. Thus they have their own Muftiates, Sheriat court and Quranic schools. There are in the civil and military service of the country a number of Muslims. In the army we find several distinguished officers, and a large number of Muslim troops have their own Imam whose headquarters are at Constanza. One also meets with some Muslim doctors, lawyers, and engineers. Muslims are duly represented in the Parliament, and have three newspapers, two of which appear in Turkish at Silistria, the third at Bazajek. For religious instruction they have 200 Imams, 271 Khateebs (preachers), 250 Muezzins. The Governor of Cabadin is a Muslim, and the sub-Governor of Constanza was for a long time a Muslim.

The Dobruja province is dotted over with mosques. King Charl Mosque at Constanza, which is remarkably beautiful, was built by the Rumanian Government, and furnished by the Turkish Government of Sultan Abdul Hamid. In 1879 an Islamic college was installed at Babadagh but in 1901 it was transferred to Mejidieh, where a large Muslim community exists. A second college was founded by the Muslims in 1920 at Silistria, where courses

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are given in Islamic and modern sciences. In 1906 a mosque was built at Bucharest, the only one on the left bank of the Danube. A beautiful mausoleum containing the tomb of the great Muslim preacher Sari Saltik, exists at Babadagh. The Rumanian Muslims seek every opportunity to get into close contact with the Muslim countries, as is evidenced by a delegation of Rumanian Ulemas who visited the Near East a few years ago.

Muslims in Poland

The last region of domiciled Muslims in Europe is Poland, where, before the Great War, nearly 7,000 were under Russian domination. Their affairs were administered by the Muftiate of the Crimea. That great dignitary did indeed journey nearly 1,000 miles to attend to the needs of his co-religionists, which, quite naturally, gave dissatisfaction to his little northern flock. The Polish Imams received no salary from the Russian Government and, in consequence, were not satisfactorily instructed. The majority of the Tartars were employed in the military service or, as Civil Servants were dispersed throughout Russia. Thus they could not receive any religious education, and their children were brought up in complete ignorance of the Islamic religion.

The World War had another detrimental effect on these people, who were driven out of their homes, as the majority of Muslim villages were situated on the Russo-German front. When the war was over they returned to their ruined homes, but only after great suffering, for many of them had perished in Russia. When Poland was reborn, their first task was to rebuild, both materially and spiritually, in which the Government greatly assisted them financially. Muftis, Imams, and religious teachers were elected and paid by the Government, and Muslim religious schools were supported by the State. For place of worship the King of Egypt contributed five hundred pounds, and Tartar Muslim emigrants in America offered what they could collect. Generally speaking, the religious situation in the Moslem villages in Poland is satisfactory.

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CAUSES OF UNREST IN PALESTINE

Palestine represents an important British strategical base at the approaches to the Suez Canal. The base, which was created immediately after the British occupation of the country in 1918, has of recent years been thoroughly reconstructed. On the shores of the Mediterranean was built the first-class port of Haifa, which approaches in size that of Marseilles. This Near Eastern Singapore, as it is called, is an excellent place of anchorage for the British navy. It was to the port of Haifa, when Anglo-Italian relations reached their maximum intensity, that the British could transfer their Mediterranean fleet from Malta in immediate proximity to the Suez Canal.

Early in 1935 a pipe line supplying oil from north Iraq to Haifa was opened. This pipe line was built through the desert under exceptionally difficult conditions and at a greatly forced pace in order to provide oil for Britain's naval bases in the Mediterranean, and for her naval, air and tank forces. In the near future, Haifa is to be connected with Baghdad by railway.

It is proposed also to build a big naval base at Akaba on the Red Sea. This base will receive its oil supply from Haifa, with which it will be connected by a pipe line and a network of roads crossing chiefly the territory of Palestine. There is even a project to link up Akaba with the Mediterranean by a canal, to run almost parallel to the Suez Canal.

British Policy has Military Basis

It is the strategical position of Palestine from the military point of view that determines British policy there. Britain holds Palestine under her direct control. While in the adjacent mandated Arabian states there is at least a

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semblance of national government, Palestine is administered directly by British civil servants. Whereas Britain has renounced her mandate in Iraq in favour of an agreement for a so-called alliance, and whereas France is heading for a similar manœuvre in regard to Syria, the British mandate over Palestine is regarded as something inviolable.

This point was put very frankly by *Great Britain and East*, semi-official British colonial organ, some few months before the Palestine disorder broke out. This organ wrote :—

" It seems difficult to see in what circumstances Great Britain could ever withdraw her authority completely from a territory which lies right athwart her imperial communications, especially now that her naval bases in the Mediterranean are viewed in a different light from heretofore. The outlet for the vital supplies from the Iraq oil-fields is now Haifa, which itself is destined within the near future to become one of the great entrepots of the world. The desert route through the Transjordan corridor, along which the pipe line runs and a railway which has already been surveyed, may prove an important element in imperial strategy..... ...The British government must, therefore, frame its policy on the presumption that for at least the measurable future, the ultimate sovereignty in Palestine must remain in its hands."

Zionism for Britain's Benefit

In order to strengthen her " ultimate authority " in Palestine, Britain is creating, in this of all the Arabian countries, a so-called " Jewish national home ". Jut as in Ireland, she created a stronghold for herself in Protestant Ulster, so in the vast world of the Arabs Britain tries to make a Zionist Ulster of Palestine.

Zionist immigration to Palestine has been growing from year to year. During the first 10 years of the British occupation, an average of 10,000 Jews arrived annually. But in

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1933 the number of immigrants was more than 30,000, in 1934 more than 40,000 and in 1935 about 60,000. In 1919 there were 57,000 Jews in Palestine, one-fifteenth of the entire population, while, at the present time, there are approximately 400,000, about one-third. If immigration continues at the present rate, then in seven or eight years it is possible that the Jews will form the majority of the population. Britain relies on *Zionist* immigration to thwart the national aspirations of the Arabs.

Immigration threatens not only the political interests of the Arab majority, but also the economic basis of their existence. A number of official British reports—by Sir Walter Shaw, Sir John Hope Simpson, Johnson-Crossby and others—point out that as a result of *Zionist* colonization, the Arab fellahs are experiencing a sharp land hunger. According to the figures of Sir John Hope Simpson, out of every 10 Palestine fellahs, seven either have no land at all or have insufficient to support even a hungry existence. Whole villages are driven from the soil to make room for citrus plantations. If in the England of Sir Thomas More's day "sheep devoured men," then in the Palestine of our day men are being "devoured" by citrus trees.

This situation has determined the principal demands of the Arab national movement in Palestine; the stopping of *Zionist* immigration and a ban on the sale of land to the *Zionists*.

Britain still continues to support *Zionism*, however, seeing in the *Zionists* her principal strong-hold in a country of great importance as a strategical base. The British government points out that the terms of the League of Nations mandate provide for support of *Zionism*. The Arabs retort by demanding that the mandate be withdrawn.

British journalists with nothing else to do can look for "the hand of Italy" in the Palestine happenings. There can be no doubt that with the occupation of Abyssinia, the Suez

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Canal becomes an important imperial line of communications for Italy. An Anglo-Italian struggle for the Suez Canal and the Eastern Mediterranean is doubtless inevitable, even if Britain and Italy are able to reach a temporary compromise. Neither can we doubt that Italy is probably ready to support any anti-British movement in this part of the world. But it is clear, however, that the contradictions created by British policy in Palestine – a policy of supporting Zionism against the Arab majority of the population—were bound to lead, apart from any Italian assistance and independently of it, to a considerable Arab national movement against Britain and Zionism. This movement grew and strengthened long before Anglo-Italian relations acquired their present acuteness. In 1929 and 1933 it had already found expression in insurrections.

New Outburst is Serious Problem

The disorders that have now taken place in Palestine are a repetition of the 1929 and 1933 events, but on an incomparably larger scale. They have taken place under new conditions.

In the first place, Zionist immigration and the expropriation of the Arabs' lands have assumed record dimensions —the figures are six times as large as in 1929 and twice as large as in 1933.

In the second place, Britain is again trying to impose on Palestine the scheme of a legislative council, which when previously advanced aroused the opposition of the Arab nationalists. At the same time, the project of a Jewish autonomous government within the confines of Palestine is being advanced. Under this scheme the barren, stony uplands and the sandy plains would come under an Arabian canton, while the fruitful citrus valleys created by the hard work of the Arabian peasantry would form a Zionist canton.

In the third place, Britain's prestige in Palestine has been largely weakened, owing to her vacillations on the Abyssinian question.

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In the fourth place, the victory of the people's front in a number of European countries stimulates the national movements of the colonial countries.

All these factors—along with the basic one, the dislogdement of the Arab majority by the *Zionists*—have given rise to a fresh and mighty outburst of the national movement.

The Palestine disorders have gone on for more than four months. It is still early to predict the outcome of this movement though through the intervention of Nuri Pasha, Iraq's Foreign Minister, the Arab Higher Committee have decided to suspend the strike, presumably as the result of a tacit agreement that further Jewish immigration will be stopped. Britain may possibly be compelled to make some temporary compromise with the Arab nationalists. Much depends on the extent of the moral support the movement will receive from the adjacent Arab countries. But however events may develop, one thing is certain: the Palestine disorders are creating great difficulties for the British empire and may involve grave complications in the international sphere.

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HOME LIFE OF THE HOLY PROPHET

"It is strongly corroborative of Muhammad's sincerity," says Sir William Muir, an unfriendly critic of Islam and the Holy Prophet, "that the earliest converts to Islam were his bosom friends and the people of his household, who, intimately acquainted with his private life, could not fail otherwise to have detected those discrepancies which more or less invariably exist between the professions of the hypocritical deceiver abroad and his actions at home."

The family life of a man is the best judge of his character. He can dissemble and dissimulate in society, but he cannot disguise his real feelings and character from those among whom he is bred and brought up and spends the major part of his time. If man is known by the company he keeps, his best judges are those with whom he keeps company, and they are the members of his family, his relatives and friends. Tested by this touchstone, the private character of the Holy Prophet of Islam stands unequalled in sublimity and nobility. If his most unscrupulous and uncompromising enemies could not ascribe a lie to him, and his devout followers looked upon him as the most generous, the most courageous, the most truthful and honest man that had ever lived, the members of his family and those nearest and dearest to him were no less impressed by the uniform purity of his character. At the age of 25, in the spring of his life, he married Khadija, a respectable lady of very mature age. She had passed the bloom of her life and was 15 years older than him. She had married twice before she married the Holy Prophet.

Notwithstanding this disparity in their ages, mutual devotion pervaded this happy union for upwards of 25 years. What an indelible impression did the faithful and loving behaviour of the Holy Prophet leave upon Khadija's mind may be guaged from the following incident.

At the age of forty, when one night in the Mount Hira the Holy Prophet was absorbed in introspection and meditation, he was called by a mighty Voice. "Read," said the Voice. "What shall I read," said the Holy Prophet. "Read

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in the name of thy Lord Who created man from a clot of blood and taught him with pen what he knew not." The Prophet was terrified. He ran to Khadija trembling and told her all that had happened. He was rent with fear and anxiety. Doubt preyed upon his heart. He could not decide what the Voice meant. He might have been possessed and fallen a victim to evil spirits, he thought. Khadija consoled and comforted him. "Be of good cheer, O dear husband, by Him in Whose hands stands Khadija's life, He shall not disgrace and destroy thee, for thou speakest the truth, dost not return evil for evil, keepest faith, and art kind to thy relations and friends, helpest the needy and the poor, and entertainest guests, and art the embodiment of all that is good." She was firmly convinced that it was the voice of an angel that had spoken to him, and that he was commissioned to reform the corrupted humanity and give life to the spiritually dead world. When none believed in him, when he himself had not yet awakened to the full consciousness of his mission and his heart was full of doubts, when all around him was dark and despairing, her love, her faith stood by him. She was ever his angel of hope and consolation. She loved him most because she knew him most. She was the first to believe in him because she was the first to be given an opportunity to study his character. The Holy Prophet was not only faithful to her when she lived; to the end of his life he entertained the tenderest recollection of her love and devotion, and remembered her with the same intensity of affection. Her name was never mentioned before him but tears welled up in his eyes. He used to send presents to her friends. One day, relates Ayesha (in later years his most dearly loved wife), Khadija's sister came to see the Holy Prophet, and knocked at the door asking for permission. The Holy Prophet recognized her voice and hurried to open the door, exclaiming, "My Khadija's sister has come." Here is a husband whose example all husbands should follow.

The Holy Prophet was not only a loving husband, he was a noble master, too. "Ten years," says Ans, his faithful servant, "I served the Prophet, but he never scolded me for what I did or failed to do."

His wife, Khadija, gave him a slave, Zaid bin Haris by name. The Prophet enfranchised him and loved him as he loved his own sons, so much so that people used to call him Zaid, son of Muhammad. This kindness on the one side gave

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rise to absolute devotion on the other, and the Arab boy could not be induced even by his own father to return to his tribe or forsake the Holy Prophet. Zaid's father came to the Holy Prophet and requested him to allow his son to go home with him. "I have no objection," said the Holy Prophet, "if Zaid wishes to go with you." "I will not leave thee," Zaid said, clinging to the Prophet, "for thou hast been a father and mother to me."

The Holy Prophet's affection for Zaid was too strong to be cooled down by the death of the latter. It survived his death, and his son, Osama, was treated by those Prophet with distinguished favour and was among those persons whom he loved most. When Abu Bakr and Omar, his two most faithful followers, dared not speak to him, Osama would approach him without any hesitation. Faithfulness was the central point of his character and the cardinal article of his faith. If once he had contracted friendship with a person he was not the man to break it or even let it cool down.

The Holy Prophet's life was an unbroken record of returning good for good or even good for evil when the latter was not incompatible with his sense of justice or involved no injustice to anybody else. Abu Talib, his uncle, had brought him up. After his marriage with Khadija his monetary condition had much improved. Abu Talib's endeavour to maintain the old position of his family had considerably straitened his circumstances. It was at this period that the Holy Prophet tried to discharge some portion of the debt of gratitude and obligation he owed his uncle by charging himself with the education and upbringing of his son, Ali. Henceforward Ali lived with his benefactor. Gifted with a remarkable insight he studied the character of the Holy Prophet minutely. He believed in him when he was only a lad of fourteen or fifteen, and at a time when the Prophet's mention of his claim met with derision and mockery. This solicitous regard for his little cousin on the Holy Prophet's part, and the reverential affection of the young Ali for him grew as they grew in years till the Holy Prophet sealed the bond of his love by marrying his daughter, Fatima, to him. The strength and beauty of the Holy Prophet's character lie in the fact that whosoever came in contact with him believed in his honesty, sincerity, truthfulness, and in the cause that was so dear to his heart, and the longer and closer that contact became the stronger and firmer the faith grew.

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The Holy Prophet was not only a warm friend, a noble master, a loving husband, but an affectionate and kind father as well. All the hardships and privations he had to undergo, and the bitter opposition and persecution he had to contend with could not disturb the equanimity of his mind and embitter his temper. He was a preacher, a teacher, a legislator, a lawyer, a magistrate, a judge, a general, and a king. But his onerous duties and grave public responsibilities could not encroach upon his affections as a father. He had divided his time into three parts—one was given to God, the second allotted to his family, the third to himself. When public business began to press upon him he gave up one-half of the latter portion to the service of others. He was scrupulously faithful to all these divisions of his time. He was tenderly devoted to his children. He had four daughters and three sons from Khadija, his dearly loved wife. All died before him; only Fatima, his youngest daughter, survived him. Their loss wrung the heart of the bereaved father, so tenderly and devotedly attached to them, that he wept over their death. Standing by the death-bed of his son Ibrahim, he said: "Eyes are shedding tears and the heart is sorrowful, and we do not say anything that displeases our Lord, and we are sorely grieved, O Ibrahim, on account of your separation." One of his companions, seeing his eyes shedding tears, said, "What is this, O Prophet of God?" "Who is not affectionate to God's creatures and his own childen," replied the Holy Prophet, "God will not be affectionate to him." See a man whom the most deterrent and relentless persecution could not daunt, whose peace of mind was not disturbed even when a price was laid upon his head, and who led all the expeditions in which his armies were outnumbered and outprovisioned in person, weeping on the death of a little baby. "There is something so tender and womanly, and withal so heroic, about the man," says Lane Poole, "that one is in peril of finding the judgment unconsciously blinded by the feeling of reverence and well-nigh love that such a nature inspires. He who, standing alone, braved for years the hatred of his people, is the same who was never the first to withdraw his hand from another's clasp; the beloved of children, who never passed a group of little ones without a smile from his wonderful eyes and a kind word for them, sounding all the kinder in that sweet-toned voice."

The Holy Prophet not only cherished a deep affection

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for children, he knew also that they possessed a sense of respectability.

He placed a very high ideal before his followers in this respect. '*Akrimu Auladakum*' (honour your children) he said, and he himself lived up to that lofty ideal. He used to stand up when his daughter Fatima came to see him. All religions have laid down injunctions and precepts as to how children should behave towards their parents, but utter silence as to the kind of treatment to be meted out to the children by the parents is observable in all the faiths except Islam. The Holy Prophet was not unmindful of the mentality of children, and knew quite well that lack of due honour shown to them in dealing with them produced meanness of disposition in them.

This is a very brief and incomplete sketch of the dealings of the Holy Prophet with the members of his family.

This is one aspect of his life in which he demonstrates with practical example that he is the best exemplar and the highest model of virtue for all men. It is the distinguishing characteristic of his life that he not only gave practical rules of guidance in all walks of life, but gave by his life a practical illustration of all those rules. Sentimentalists and visionaries may not be pleased with him because he has not given some moral precepts quite impracticable in the actual lives of men, and because his message is less poetical and less mystical but appeals more by its practicality and strong common-sense to higher minds, and is also adapted to the capacity and demands of inferior natures which require positive and comprehensible directions for moral guidance. His message was for all classes, and not for the visionaries only. He was sent as a mercy for all mankind, and a perfect model in all aspects of life. He was the victim of persecution at Mecca for thirteen years; the head of a state at Medina, he legislated and disposed of legal cases like a wise judge; he led his armies to battle in person, and fought like a soldier in the cause of truth, justice, and freedom. He contracted marriages and had children. He served as a shepherd and acted like a king. Thus we see that in all walks of life he was an excellent exemplar and a perfect model for all men in all ages and under all climes, and thus is justified the claim of the Holy Quran: "Certainly you have in the Apostle of Allah an excellent exemplar for him who hopes in Allah and the latter day and remembers Allah much."

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HUMANITY NEEDS A GREAT LEADER

"We have," says the *Statesman*, "many times said that nothing can now save the world except a change in the hearts of men, and that since we are plainly incapable of changing our own hearts (how often do the practical men remind us that human nature does not change?) and of getting rid of our greed and selfishness, our belief in the profit motive, our national rivalries and distrusts, nothing can save us but a saviour. What the world is crying out for is not a great national leader, like Hitler or Mussolini, but a great leader of humanity, some one who will overstep all boundaries of nationality, religion and colour, and will address himself directly to the hearts of all men, to Frenchmen and Germans, to Japanese and Russians and the British alike, to Christians and Hindus and Mussulmans. In these days of wireless and of quick communications of all sorts such a world movement is perfectly possible. All that is required is a human international dynamo comparable in power to such national dynamos as Hitler and Mussolini. For such a man the world is waiting, but still he does not appear. And we continue with our preparations for killing each other on a gigantic scale by the latest scientific methods for the mass production of death.

"When the ancient world was breaking up such an international changer of hearts appeared. He belonged to a subject race and His own people procured His death because he wanted to reform their religious customs and refused to lead a national movement against the Roman Empire. In His lifetime, therefore, He was a failure, but after His death he became a world dynamo and in less than three hundred years the proud Roman Empire accepted as a God the malefector whom a Roman procurator had condemned. Since then His influence has continued to grow and down the ages He has subdued and changed many thousands of individual

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hearts. But for humanity as a whole, His teaching has proved too difficult, and in the broad sense it remains true that Christianity has as yet never been tried. To-day by a purely intellectual approach many thinkers are coming to the conclusion that Christ was the greatest thinker and wisest man humanity has produced, and that if we could attain His point of view we could solve our economic difficulties. Humanity would be a friendly family, and if there was a surplus in America and shortage in China, America would hasten to make good the shortage,—and *vice versa*. The convinced Christian therefore believes that the Saviour of the world has already arrived, and all that is required is for us to become Christians. But this does not get over the difficulty that our hearts are hard and insensible. We cannot command love, and since we do not love our neighbours as ourselves—much less people of other races and languages who are not even our neighbours—we cannot be Christians. We still therefore need a visible human leader, a man who will take us out of ourselves and reinterpret Christianity to the modern world."

That much-needed international dynamo, that great changer of human hearts has already come and come in the fulness of time and in fulfilment of the prophecies of the prophets of yore. He has appeared in Arya Varta, in this land of the ancient sages and seers. He is greater than the "malefactor" who was accepted by the proud Roman Empire as a god 300 years after he had been condemned to death by a procurator of the same Empire. He is even greater than Budhha and Krishna. He is the hope of all nations and the long-awaited Saviour of all races. But like his prototype, Jesus, he was not recognised in his lifetime but in a much shorter period than it took Jesus Christ to be recognised as a world dynamo, the world shall accept and follow him as its only guide and leader. He is Ahmad of Qadian. Let those who think that a world leader is needed to extricate the affairs of men from the morass into which they have become hopelessly enmeshed fly to this great Divine Teacher and Leader.

The Ahmadiyya Movement

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THE Ahmadiyya Movement was founded by Hazrat Ahmad, the Promised Messiah and Mehdi and the expected Messenger of all nations. In the spirit and power of all the earlier prophets he came to serve and reinterpret the final and eternal teachings laid down by God in the Holy Quran. The Movement therefore represents the true and real Islam and seeks to uplift humanity and establish peace throughout the world. Hazrat Ahmad died in 1908, and the present Head of the Movement is his second successor, Hazrat Mirza Bashir-ud-Din Mahmud Ahmad, under whose direction the Movement has established Missions in many parts of the world, the following being the addresses of some of them:

(1) THE LONDON MOSQUE, 63, Melrose Road,
Southfields, London, S. W. 18, England.

(2) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT IN ISLAM,
56 E, Congress St., Suite 1307,
Chicago, Illinois, U. S. America.

(3) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
P. O. Box 39, Salt Pond,
Gold Coast, West Africa.

(4) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Rose Hill, Mauritius.

(5) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
P. O Box 727, Lagos,
Nigeria, W. Africa.

(6) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Box No. 305, G. P. O.
Perth, W. Australia.

(7) THE CENTRAL (E.A.) AHMADIYYA
MUSLIM ASSOCIATION,
P. O. Box No. 554, Nairobi
(Kenya Colony).

(8) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Mount Carmel, Haifa, Palestine.

(9) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Oetœsan Ahmadiah,
Defensielijn V/d Bosch, No. 139, Batavia Centrum, Java.

(10) THE AHMADIYYA MOVEMENT,
Oetœsan Ahmadiyya
Padang—(Sumatra).

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